

Dear Member,

**It has been confirmed to us today by the Highways Authority, that with effect from the 1st January 2004 Police Forces in England & Wales will no longer be escorting abnormal loads, which includes heavy mobile cranes.**

Apparently, the Police Forces have been notifying companies who regularly have Police escorts for their vehicles of the new situation. We attach a copy of a Code of Practice produced by the Highways Agency. I must stress that this is not the final draft and there may be minor alterations in due course. The code confirms that hauliers and crane hire companies can now escort their own vehicles providing they comply with the Code of Practice. In Scotland arrangements are slightly different, and I also attach a circular from Inspector Malcolm representing ACPOS (Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland) confirming the position there.

On the face of it, this appears to be good news for the hauliers and crane hire companies and should give more flexibility of movement in the future. **Abnormal load notification to the Police and Highway & Bridge Authorities remains as before. One of the main issues is that the vans that escort the vehicles must be of a certain specification as detailed in the code.**

MEMBERS WHO REGULARLY HAVE POLICE ESCORTS WITH THEIR VEHICLES SHOULD MAKE CONTACT WITH THEIR POLICE CONTACTS TO ENSURE THAT EVERYONE IS AWARE OF THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES. IT MAY BE IN THE EARLY STAGES THAT SOME POLICE FORCES ARE MORE PROACTIVE ON THIS MATTER THAN OTHERS AND INDEED, AS IN SCOTLAND, SOME FORCES MAY STILL CHOOSE TO PROVIDE THE ESCORTS IN THE SHORT TERM.

We appreciate that this is short notice and hopefully common sense will prevail in the early stages regarding for example the exact spec van for January 1st. If you have any query on this subject after speaking to the Police, please contact Colin Wood at the CPA.